

Belleville Township High School (BTHS), located in Southern Illinois, opened in 1916 and has since grown to two campuses with over 5,000 students in attendance. BTHS aims to provide a diverse student body with a quality education and the lifelong skills necessary to address individual, local, and global challenges. In order to achieve this goal, the district feels it is important to provide their educators with quality evaluations to continuously improve academic standards.

With 274 full-time teachers employed between the district's two buildings, it is important that the administration have the ability to collaborate electronically with the educators they are evaluating. With their previous evaluation process, this need wasn't being met - until BTHS signed with Embrace®. "We didn't have a computer software, it was all paper and pencil, so it was a challenge of how the evaluations were done" explained Tony Thompson, Director of Individualized Education. "Now that we are using a computer-based software, I don't have to get out of my chair and walk to the 3rd floor to ask them [questions], because we are already doing it in real time."

Selecting an evaluation software can be difficult, but when BTHS reviewed their options, they knew Embrace® was the right choice. "We were already familiar with [Embrace®], because we use EmbraceEP®, so it was an easy choice." testified Tony. "[It] was probably the easiest choice because we knew what we were getting. We were going to get great support across the board, so it was a no-brainer."

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Key Facts About BTHS:

- Over 5,000 High School Students
- 274 Full Time Educators Employed
- 100% Rated as Proficient or Excellent On Teacher Evaluations

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While offering an online solution for educators was important, it was also crucial that it didn't add additional work for them. "I like the way [EmbraceEval® is] set up for artifact collection, from teacher ease [of use] as much as [mine]. When we are evaluating, I can hover my mouse over one of the domain areas, and there will be a pop up that will describe what the domain is. I'm not having to go back to a manual to look every time. I can put the manual aside and focus on what I need to do." stated Tony. "Sometimes I have 15 or 16 people to evaluate and I would say 3-4 hours per person are saved easily, between everything that needs to happen, between the pre and post conferences, the artifact collection, the informal evaluations, the formal evaluations — this has saved us a ton of time."

Effective evaluations help establish clear expectations, while recognizing teaching techniques that form positive student outcomes. Creating an evaluation software that can improve transparency and collaboration between educators and evaluators is the primary focus of EmbraceEVAL®. "If I input something, the teachers will get a notification immediately." explained Tony. "When they're adding something in, and then save it, the notification comes to me and it's almost in real-time. If one pops up, I can click on it, and if there are any concerns, I know immediately to talk with that teacher or set up a time to talk with them, so it's helped a lot with the collaboration."

Providing outstanding support is the cherry on top, so when asked if Tony would recommend EmbraceEVAL® software he quickly commented, "The best feature of everything is the customer service. You guys have gone above and beyond and I love it. I have never heard anything negative about Embrace® or heard anyone complain about it. I could not think of a single thing I would do differently. I feel like [Embrace®] updates the system if there are any changes..always listening to people and hearing any concerns. I would not change anything, unless you can think of a way to have it type it for me."

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